

WASHINGTON – The U.S. House of Representative today overwhelmingly passed a proposal engineered by U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) to fully integrate Israel into the U.S. National Ballistic Missile Defense System.

The proposal, contained in the final conference report on the National Defense Authorization Act, requires the Secretary of Defense to report back to Congress within 180 days with a plan to improve the coordination, interoperability, and integration of the U.S. National Ballistic Missile Defense System with Israel's missile defense architecture.

"Democracies are strongest when they stick together," Congressman Kirk said. "President Ahmadinejad calls for Israel to be wiped off the map and talks of the Jewish people's annihilation. Today America sends a message to the Iranian dictator—Israel will have the full weight of America's national missile defense system to defend herself."

The United Nations Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Government of Iran itself have highlighted Iran's rapidly expanding ballistic missile program.

"The U.N. Security Council, the IAEA and the Government of Iran all tell us that Iran is building ballistic missiles capable of hitting Tel Aviv and Jerusalem," said Kirk, who also serves as Navy Reserve Intelligence Officer. "Israel will be the first and only country to fully integrate with the American missile defense architecture. It is a symbol of our shared values and a safer 21st century."